

Message Text

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ACTION SCS-03

INFO OCT-01 AF-06 ISO-00 SSO-00 /010 W

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FM AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 3260

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E.O. 11652: NA

TAGS: CASC(ANTLES, PETER & HAMMATT, WILLIAM)

SUBJECT: W/W PETER ANTLES & WILLIAM HAMMATT

REF: A. STATE 036257 B. ADDIS 1749 C. ADDIS 722

1. REGRET NOT HAVING PROVIDED EARLIER CLARIFICATION OF REFTEL B PARA 1B, BUT ASMARA EVACUATION AND MYRIAD OF PROBLEMS RESULTING THEREFROM HAVE PRE-OCCUPIED 2-MAN CONSULAR SECTION HERE.

2. WE AGREE THAT DEPT. SHOULD NOW NOTIFY NOK (REFTEL C, PARA 6) THAT SUBJECTS ARE MISSING AND MORE THAN LIKELY DEAD ACCORDING TO THE OPINION OF THOSE WHO ARE FAMILIAR WITH AREA INCLUDING LOCAL AUTHORITIES, MEMBERS OF SOBEK EXPEDITIONS AND SURVIVORS OF RAFT TRIP. CONSUL RECENTLY TALKED WITH MAJOR ESHETE ALEMU OF CID WHO IS IN CHARGE OF INVESTIGATION INTO MURDER OF GERMAN RAFT TEAM MEMBER. ON LAST TRIP TO AREA, INVESTIGATORS ALSO INQUIRED OF POLICE AND LOCAL INHABITANTS WHETHER MISSING AMERICANS HAD BEEN SEEN BUT RECEIVED NEGATIVE RESPONSE. AT POINT ALONG RIVER WHERE RAFT TEAM HAD CAMPED AND GERMAN WAS KILLED, OTHER TEAM MEMBER STATED THAT ON ARRIVAL AT SITE, THEY NOTICED FRESH SHOEPRINTS OF FOREIGN TYPE. WE ARE ASSUMING PRINTS PROBABLY BELONGED TO SUBJECTS AS NO OTHER FOREIGNERS WERE KNOWN TO BE RECENTLY IN AREA. FROM THIS POINT TO SHAFARTACK BRIDGE, A DISTANCE OF APPROXIMATELY 95 TO 115 MILES, WHERE BRIDGE GUARDS WHO ON DUTY 24 HOURS

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REPORTED HAVING SEEN NO FOREIGNERS FOR MONTHS, IS AREA

WHERE SUBJECTS MORE THAN LIKELY DISAPPEARED.

3. AS STATED EARLIER, THERE ARE NO TOWNS IN THIS AREA, ONLY GROUPS OF NATIVES WHO LIVE ALONG BANK OF RIVER, NOR ARE THERE TELEPHONE COMMUNICATIONS OR ROADS. RIVER FLOWS THROUGH DEEP GORGE, SIMILAR TO GRAND CANYON, FOR HUNDREDS OF MILES SO THAT IN MOST PLACES IT CAN BE FOLLOWED ON FOOT ONLY ALONG TOP OF CLIFF AND NOT AT RIVER LEVEL.

4. CID TEAM HAD PROMISED TO ADVISE US IF THEY RECEIVE ANY INFORMATION RE SUBJECTS DURING THEIR CONTINUING INVESTIGATION OF GERMAN'S MURDER. PER REFTEL B, PARA 4, THEY DO NOT HAVE SUFFICIENT RESOURCES TO DEPLOY SECOND TEAM TO SEARCH 100 MILE ALONG AREA WHICH, IN ANY CASE, IS EXTREMELY DIFFICULT TERRAIN TO COVER.

5. SUGGEST DEPT. EMPHASIZE FOLLOWING TO NOK:

A. AS OF TODAY, SUBJECTS HAVE NOT CONTACTED EMBASSY OR HOTEL WHERE THEY LEFT BELONGINGS. LAST WRITTEN CORRESPONDENCE RECEIVED FROM THEM WAS DATED DECEMBER 31 AND THEY INFORMED EMBASSY THAT THEY EXPECTED TO BE IN ADDIS NO LATER THAN FEB 5.

B. EMBASSY'S OPINION THAT SUBJECTS HAVE LIKELY MET WITH VIOLENCE IS BASED UPON THEIR FAILURE MEET PRE-ARRANGED SUPPLY DROP IN JANUARY, SERIES OF FIOLENT ACTS WHICH RECENTLY OCCURRED AGAINST FOREIGNERS IN BLUE NILE GORGE AREA, AND THE STATEMENTS OF MANY PEOPLE WELL - ACQUAINTED WITH THIS PART OF COUNTRY WHO BELIEVE THE CHANCES FOR SUBJECTS SURVIVAL ON FOOT FOR 200 MILES ARE SLIM.

C. EVERYTHING WITHIN LOCAL AUTHORITIES CAPABILITIES IS BEING DONE TO DETERMINE WHEREABOUTS OF SUBJECTS.

D. SUBJECTS EMBARKED ON TRIP AGAINST ADVISE OF EMBASSY.

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6. WE WILL KEEP THE DEPARTMENT INFORMED OF ANY NEW DEVELOPMENTS.
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